

It's important to provide education, resources, and opportunities for our children to succeed from their earliest years. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which I supported, is providing important support to South Dakota's schools and helping prevent cuts to education programs in South Dakota. The economic recovery package takes significant steps to invest in our children from birth, laying the foundation for our future workforce.

The Recovery and Reinvestment Act makes historic investments in K-12 education, reversing years of underfunding of critical programs like No Child Left Behind, Title I grants and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Under the recovery plan South Dakota will receive an additional \$34.5 million for Title I grants and \$32.4 million for IDEA. In addition to more adequately funding education for students at the primary and secondary levels, the economic recovery bill will provide more students with the opportunity to receive or continue their higher education, building the job skills necessary for the future. The bill provides taxpayers with a new "American Opportunity" tax credit of up to \$2,500 of the cost of tuition and related expenses paid during the taxable year. In addition, the legislation expands eligibility for the federal Pell Grant by \$500, with South Dakota students receiving an additional \$52.2 million in much-needed financial aid.

I'll continue to work in Congress to address a range of education needs. I have long supported successful early education programs like Head Start and Early Head Start. I also support legislation to provide resources to local school districts for the development of quality preschool programs. When it comes to K-12 education, it's clear that the No Child Left Behind Act needs to be improved, because it has fallen far short of its stated goals of increasing all student achievement and providing better resources for failing schools. I'll also continue to focus my efforts to address the soaring price of college tuition and remove other obstacles that make it harder for qualified students in South Dakota to go to college.

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